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WA State Bishops on Coal

Michael Sean Winters | Nov. 15, 2013 Distinctly Catholic

The Washington State Catholic Conference recently issued a statement [1]that, to my mind at least, exemplifies the appropriate stance of the Church in the public square. They acknowledge that there are a variety of perspectives involved in assessing a proposed coal terminal in their state. Then, they state clearly the moral vision of the Church, which includes care for creation. There is no chest-thumping in their analysis and they conclude with an offer to work with all parties to reach a settlement. I especially liked this paragraph:

In a special way we want to bring to the table of discussion our tradition that has carefully thought through the connections between human and environmental ecology. Catholic social teaching, which affirms a special concern for the poor, has long held that people living in poverty are most at risk if we fail in our responsibility to care for creation. ?As a result of where they live and their limited access to resources, the poor will experience most directly the harmful effects of climate change and the burdens of any measures to address it, including potential escalating energy costs, worker displacement and health problems.? (Letter on the occasion of the G-8 Summit by seven presidents of the Catholic bishops? conferences, 2007.)

We don't always need to sound like we have all the answers. We don't need to be dismissive of others' concerns. We do, really do, bring to the table something unique, a sustained moral focus on both human and natural ecology, while most partisans tend to neglect the one or the other. The Washington State Catholic Conference is doing good work and should serve as a model for other state Catholic conferences.

Source URL (retrieved on *05/02/2016 - 06:06*): http://www.ncronline.org/blogs/distinctly-catholic/wa-state-bishops-coal

Links:
[1] http://www.dioceseofspokane.org/bjc_2013/coal111113.htm